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Letter dated 28 May 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you a letter from the Special Representative of the Syrian Coalition dated 28 May 2014 (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mark Lyall **Grant**

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Annex to the letter dated 28 May 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the people of Syria and the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces (Syrian Coalition), it is my grave responsibility to draw to your attention the Syrian regime's ongoing, systematic violations of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014). As the Security Council deliberates its response to the third report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), it is imperative that it act with renewed urgency to enforce international humanitarian law and implement immediate and sustained cross-border access to all areas in Syria where people are in need, as demanded by the Security Council in resolution 2139 (2014).

On 2 October 2013, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/15) in which it called upon all parties in Syria to support the delivery of humanitarian emergency assistance on the basis of need, devoid of political prejudices and aims. Outraged by the Syrian regime's failure to uphold that presidential statement, on 22 February 2014, the Council unanimously adopted Security Council resolution 2139 (2014) in which it demanded that all parties, but in particular the Syrian regime, implement the provisions of the presidential statement and facilitate the immediate expansion of humanitarian relief operations, including by enabling cross-border access.

Almost eight months after the adoption of the presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/15), the humanitarian situation in Syria has worsened, not improved. As a result, a million more Syrians now live in besieged or hard-to-reach areas; 50,000 more Syrian lives have been lost and 2 million more people have been driven from their homes. Rather than strive to ease the suffering of its people, the Syrian regime has systematically employed new modes of oppression in a calculated strategy designed to starve, terrorize and brutalize the Syrian people into submission.

Among the most egregious crimes it has committed since the adoption of the presidential statement (S/PRST/2013/15), the Syrian regime has launched aerial strikes in civilian areas, employed new chemical weapons attacks using chlorine gas in violation of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), including by deploying barrel bombs filled with chlorine gas against civilians in opposition areas. Moreover, the regime and its forces have blocked cross-border aid access to over 1 million Syrians in now impossible-to-reach areas, denied access to human rights monitors, and obstructed the passage of medical supplies. Tragically and outrageously, the regime has significantly increased the indiscriminate use of barrel bombs, since the publication of the report of the Secretary-General on resolution 2139 (2014) last month, with over 140 strikes in that time period targeting predominately residential buildings and neighbourhoods in opposition-controlled areas.

Despite the clear legal and ethical obligation of the Syrian regime to cease such practices, the humanitarian situation in Syria has only deteriorated in recent weeks. Since the Secretary-General last reported on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), an array of new and unnecessary bureaucratic

impediments imposed by Syrian regime officials have ensured that access to people in hard-to-reach areas has decreased dramatically. From April to May 2014, the number of Syrians served by the World Food Programme in hard-to-reach areas declined by more than 66 per cent. Despite the adoption of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), assistance continues to be provided in a politicized and unjustifiable manner, thereby placing millions in peril.

The cooperation demonstrated by the Syrian Coalition and its partner, the Free Syrian Army, offers a marked contrast to the intransigence of the Syrian regime. As part of our efforts to implement Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), we have done the following:

1. **Engaged with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs**: Throughout the past three months, we have engaged in verbal and written communications with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and have transmitted detailed information pertaining to border crossings, epidemiology and polio eradication. The Assistance Coordination Unit has provided information clarifying the needs of the Syrian population and the local relief agencies working to provide care. Through the Information Management Unit, the Assistance Coordination Unit has shared data related to the freedom of movement of relief agencies, violence against humanitarian personnel, restrictions to aid access, the locations of active hostilities and the presence of mines and explosives that affect the delivery of humanitarian assistance. We will be sharing with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs this information and numerous recent reports.

2. **Designated empowered individuals**: To facilitate increased information sharing with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Syrian Coalition has appointed a team of officials to facilitate communication between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and opposition bodies (including the Coalition, the Assistance Coordination Unit, the Interim Government and Free Syrian Army forces on the ground), and is providing those names to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in order to support the implementation of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014). Their appointments are expected to encourage direct communication to enable the delivery of assistance and ensure that greater numbers of Syrians receive life-saving access to food, water and medicine. The Coalition notes, of course, that some communications will necessarily vary depending on the relevant actors and geographic areas, and that there are some areas controlled by extremist groups.

3. **Committed to facilitate access to hard-to-reach areas**: Particularly in the provinces of Homs, Al Hasakeh and Ladhiqiyah, where tens of thousands of residents require urgent assistance, the Syrian Coalition believes it can work productively with groups in control of opposition held areas to discuss, prepare and implement the delivery of humanitarian assistance. As we have stated repeatedly, the Syrian Coalition and the Free Syrian Army are committed to providing access to all Syrians in need, irrespective of their religion, ethnicity, geography or politics. No Syrian should have to go without food, water, medicine or urgently needed care. Furthermore, the Coalition welcomed the decision of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to investigate recent regime use of chlorine gas, and despite obstacles on the ground, the Free Syrian Army played a positive role in facilitating access to difficult-to-reach sites of investigation in Kafr Zita.

4. **Pledged to uphold humanitarian law and demilitarize schools and hospitals**: The Syrian Coalition and Free Syrian Army have repeatedly pledged their commitment to upholding humanitarian law, including through the demilitarization of schools and hospitals. In April, officials from both organizations pledged to take all efforts needed to demilitarize schools and hospitals. As promised, the Free Syrian Army is currently working to amend its Proclamation of Principles to reflect this commitment.

5. **Worked to implement the Geneva Communiqué**: The Syrian Coalition has likewise been steadfast in its commitment to secure the full implementation of the Geneva Communiqué, as required by paragraph 15 of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014). We were deeply appreciative of the efforts of the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, Lakhdar Brahimi, to bring forward a political settlement to the crisis in Syria, and shared his frustration regarding the Syrian regime's refusal to engage constructively in the peace process. Following the announcement of his impending resignation, the Syrian Coalition reached out to the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat in an effort to continue our dialogue in the search for a political solution. We remain committed to the Geneva process, and continue to believe that a political solution offers the best opportunity for long-term peace in Syria.

As important as such efforts are, however, they alone cannot counteract the brutality of the Syrian regime. It remains incumbent upon the Security Council to take all measures necessary to ensure the full and immediate implementation of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014). Vital to this effort is the provision of cross-border access.

In his latest report to the Security Council on the implementation of resolution 2139 (2014), the Secretary-General noted the readiness of the United Nations to put in place arrangements at key border and line crossings to facilitate, improve and monitor access, including a mechanism that would ensure that access is obtained to areas outside of the regime's effective control. The Security Council must now take measures to ensure that the United Nations follows through on that commitment, as demanded by the Council in resolution 2139 (2014).

It is unfathomable that the will of a brutal dictator should be allowed to supersede the needs of an innocent people. The Security Council must act without delay to enforce Security Council resolution 2139 (2014) by ensuring effective cross-border access. Doing so would alter the lives of over 1 million Syrians. As we have stated previously, the Syrian Coalition and the Free Syrian Army stand ready to facilitate cross-border access in areas under our jurisdiction, including at the Tal Shihab cross point with Jordan, and we look forward to providing all assistance necessary to ease the suffering of our people.

(*Signed*) Najib **Ghadbian**
Special Representative of the Syrian Coalition to the United Nations

Enclosure

Syrian Coalition and Free Syrian Army compliance with Security Council resolution 2139 (2014)

1. Paragraph 4: All parties must facilitate the expansion of humanitarian relief operations.

Assistance Coordination Unit

- The Assistance Coordination Unit was formed in December 2012 by the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces to coordinate urgently needed assistance to all those affected by the humanitarian crisis in Syria. The Unit coordinates the delivery of aid impartially to all Syrians regardless of ethnicity, religion or political beliefs, in line with international standards and human rights principles that aid should be given on the basis of need alone. Since its inception, the Unit has worked to facilitate and direct the delivery of urgent humanitarian supplies, including medicine and food, to towns and cities across Syria. The Unit works with local councils and local aid groups, international donors and aid agencies, and international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to identify areas of need and link donors with actors on the ground. The Unit has also played an important role in highlighting Syria's urgent humanitarian needs, producing professional and high-quality technical assessments for humanitarian and relief needs.

- The Assistance Coordination Unit employs approximately 80 enumerators in its Information Management Unit. Data collection for each type of report may vary; however, some general principles and limitations remain consistent across all reports. Both qualitative and quantitative data are gathered using direct observations and key informant interviews of relief committees, registration offices, religious leaders, local organizations, heads of household, medical staff, teachers and local police. Public places, such as schools, field hospitals, water points, markets, cemeteries and small shops, are also visited to complement interviews with direct observation.

- The Information Management Unit of the Assistance Coordination Unit provides population figures based on estimates made on the ground by observers, which are then compared to existing registration lists, beneficiary lists and local knowledge or secondary data verifications.

- The Information Management Unit provides regular status updates regarding border crossings at Bab al-Salameh, Tal Abyad, Jarablus and Bab al-Hawa. Each report is provided in English and Arabic, with a corresponding map including logos for each type of traffic: travellers, cargo and relief. Updates also include information on the time of day each border crossing opens and closes. This data is shared on a daily or near-daily basis with the Assistance Coordination Unit donor list.

- In the area of humanitarian access, the Information Management Unit of the Assistance Coordination Unit tracks restriction of movement for relief agencies; violence against relief agencies, personnel, facilities or assets; interference in humanitarian activities; availability of local partners; restrictions or obstruction of beneficiaries to access the aid; active hostilities

affecting humanitarian assistance; and presence of mines and explosives affecting delivery of humanitarian assistance.

- There are some limitations on the data collected by the Assistance Coordination Unit and its agents. The security situation varies from one governorate to another, which causes inconsistent degrees of detail in data collection. Population data are very difficult to track reliably and to verify. When data are not considered sufficiently valid, they may not be included in final reporting.

- The Assistance Coordination Unit Early Warning Alert and Response Network epidemiology report studies instances of infectious disease, including measles, cutaneous leishmaniasis, hepatitis, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, whooping cough, scabies and lice, and their corresponding treatment and morbidity rates. This data is shared on a weekly basis.

- The Assistance Coordination Unit Polio Outbreak Report records reporting of instances of acute flaccid paralysis, a potential indicator symptom of polio, and provides follow-up once samples have been collected and tested. Those data are shared on a weekly basis.

- In January 2014, the Assistance Coordination Unit launched its first Dynamic Situation Monitoring (DYNAMO) Report, which contains detailed information on the needs of Syrians inside the country's borders and reports on 79 subdistricts in Syria. The DYNAMO Report covers demographics inside Syria, humanitarian access, the severity of need, locations where relief agencies are working, aid coordination, food, water, sanitation and hygiene, education, shelter, non-food items and health.

- We will be providing recent reports to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, containing extensive details that will be helpful to the provision of humanitarian access.

2. **Paragraphs 5-8 and 16: All parties must allow the delivery of humanitarian assistance, grant humanitarian access, including cross-border/cross-line, and facilitate the efforts of the United Nations.**

Empowered individuals

- To facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, the Coalition's Political Committee appointed the following individuals and empowered them to work with the United Nations on issues related to humanitarian access under Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), under the oversight of the Committee and its Secretary-General, Hadi al-Bahra:

Coalition Vice-President, Noura al-Ameer

President, Assistance Coordination Unit, Suheir Atassi

Chief Executive Officer, Assistance Coordination Unit, Osama Kadi

Military Liaison, Hakim Nazir

Horan Revolutionary Council Representative, Dr. Musa Nasr al-Hariri

Attorney, Mohammed Sabra

Homs province

- The majority of the areas in Homs province listed below are under the control of local councils, whereas the roads leading to these areas remain under the control of the Syrian regime. We believe we can facilitate communication between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the groups in control of the opposition-held areas in order to discuss, prepare and implement the delivery of humanitarian and medical assistance.

- There are 16,000 residents in Taldo city in the Houla district of Homs province. Of those 16,000 residents, there are 600 children in need of infant milk, 280 families of martyrs, 70 orphans under the age of 15 and 90 disabled persons. There is a dire need for both humanitarian assistance and medicine in this area, including but not limited to, food baskets for 2,500 families and 5 tons of flour daily.

- There are 22,500 residents in Kafr Laha city in the Houla district of Homs province. Of those 22,500 residents, there are 800 children in need of infant milk, 122 families of martyrs, 300 orphans under the age of 15 and 100 disabled persons. There is a dire need for both humanitarian assistance and medicine in this area, including but not limited to food baskets for 3,000 families and 7 tons of flour daily.

- There are 17,500 residents in Taltheeb city in the Houla district of Homs province. Of those 17,500 residents, there are 400 children in need of infant milk, 100 families of martyrs, 70 orphans under the age of 15 and 150 disabled persons. There is a dire need for both humanitarian assistance and medicine in this area, including but not limited to food baskets for 2,000 families and 7 tons of flour daily.

- There are 5,000 residents in Tayba city in the Houla district of Homs province. Of those 5,000 residents, there are 50 children in need of infant milk, 25 families of martyrs, 25 orphans under the age of 15 and 20 disabled persons. There is a dire need for both humanitarian assistance and medicine in this area, including but not limited to food baskets for 500 families and 1.5 tons of flour daily.

- There are 3,000 residents in the cities of Birj, Al Samaleel and Keseen in the Houla district of Homs province. Of those 3,000 residents, there are 90 children in need of infant milk, 25 families of martyrs, 25 orphans under the age of 15 and 20 disabled persons. There is a dire need for both humanitarian assistance and medicine in this area, including but not limited to, food baskets for 300 families and 1 ton of flour daily.

- There are 55,000 residents in Talbeeseh city in the Talbeeseh district of Homs province. Of those 55,000 residents, there are 1,730 children in need of infant milk. There is a dire need for both humanitarian assistance and medicine in this area, including but not limited to food baskets for 5,700 families and 14.5 tons of flour daily.

- There are 15,000 residents in Ghanto city in the Ghanto district of Homs province. Of those 15,000 residents, there are 680 children in need of infant milk, 147 families of martyrs and 325 orphans under the age of 15. There is a

dire need for both humanitarian assistance and medicine in this area, including but not limited to food baskets for 1,800 families and 4 tons of flour daily.

- There are 57,750 residents in Al Rastan city in the Al Rastan district of Homs province. Of those 57,750 residents, there are 1,500 children in need of infant milk and 1,050 families of martyrs. There is a dire need for both humanitarian assistance and medicine in this area, including but not limited to food baskets for 6,000 families and 15 tons of flour daily.
- There are 17,000 residents in Tir Maala city in the Tir Maala district of Homs province. Of those 17,000 residents, there are 675 children in need of infant milk. There is a dire need for both humanitarian assistance and medicine in this area, including but not limited to food baskets for 2,700 families and 5 tons of flour daily.
- There are 125,000 residents in Waer city in the Waer district of Homs province. Of those 125,000 residents, there are 3,500 children in need of infant milk. There is a dire need for both humanitarian assistance and medicine in this area, including but not limited to food baskets for 14,000 families and 40 tons of flour daily.
- The majority of the residents in Al Zara, Al Hasn and Al Qusayr cities in Homs province fled following the Syrian Government's ethnic cleansing of those areas and they are now residing in refugee camps in Lebanon and in the surrounding border areas.

Al Hasakeh province

- The cities of Abu Rasin, Al Hasakeh city, Al Malikeyyeh, Amuda, Bir Elhilu, Darbasiyah, Jawadiyah, Qamishli, Ras al-Ain, Tal Hmis and Ya'robiyah in Al Hasakeh province are controlled by local administrative councils. We believe we can facilitate communication between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the groups in control of these opposition-held areas in order to discuss, prepare and implement the delivery of humanitarian assistance.
- The cities of Areesheh, Hole and Shaddadah in Al Hasakeh province remain under the control of the Syrian regime.

Ladhiqiyah province

The regions of Kansaba, Rabee'a and Salma in Ladhiqiyah province are opposition-controlled regions. Within these respective regions there are municipalities that are still controlled by the Syrian regime. The municipality of Qastal Maaf in the Ladhiqiyah province is under the control of the Syrian regime, while the affiliated villages are under opposition control. We believe we can facilitate communication between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the groups in control of the opposition-held areas in order to discuss, prepare and implement the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

3. **Paragraph 10: All parties must demilitarize medical facilities, schools and other civilian facilities.**

- The Free Syrian Army fully supports the demilitarization of all schools and hospitals. The Syrian Opposition Coalition and the Supreme Military Council stand ready to work with the international community to ensure the immediate and complete demilitarization of all schools and hospitals under our jurisdiction.
- The Free Syrian Army issued an official declaration signed by President Ahmad al-Jarba and Chief of Staff of the Supreme Military Council General Abdulelah al-Bashir, entitled "FSA [Free Syrian Army] calls for the immediate demilitarization of schools and hospitals", prohibiting the militarization of schools and hospitals, and will amend its Proclamation of Principles to reflect the same.
- Meanwhile, the Syrian regime has used institutions once designated for the care and education of Syrian citizens to shelter its combatants, store arms and ammunition, and to serve as military observation posts and shields for military action.
- Indeed, the Syrian regime continues to deliberately target hospitals and schools in direct contravention of article 3 of the Third Geneva Convention.
- On 27 April 2014, a Syrian regime warplane hit Generation Freedom School in Qah, Idlib province, with a fuel air bomb, killing two children and injuring many others. Generation Freedom School provides elementary and intermediate education to 800 students, many of whom are internally displaced.
- On 1 May 2014, a Syrian regime warplane hit Ein Jalout School in eastern Aleppo, killing 19 people, including 10 children, and injuring many others.

4. **Paragraph 15: All parties must work towards the implementation of the Geneva Communiqué.**

- The goal of the Geneva Conference was the full implementation of the Geneva Communiqué, beginning with the establishment of a transitional governing body exercising full executive powers, which could include members of the present Government and the opposition and other groups, and would be formed on the basis of mutual consent.
- The Syrian Coalition came to Geneva in January and February 2014 prepared to engage proactively and constructively to reach a political solution to the Syrian conflict.
- At every session, the Syrian Coalition put forward positive and implementable positions. The Assad regime came prepared only to obfuscate and delay. Repeatedly, the regime's delegation showed itself unwilling to address the core issues raised in the Geneva Communiqué.
- During the Geneva negotiations, the Syrian Coalition introduced a Statement of Basic Principles, which proposed a framework for transition. However, the Syrian regime refused to discuss it.

- The Syrian Coalition diversified its representation during the Geneva process, including by bringing representatives from armed groups during the second round of negotiations.

- The Syrian Coalition adopted the Declaration of Commitment on Compliance with International Humanitarian Law and the Facilitation of Humanitarian Assistance and sent a letter on 19 March 2014 to Under-Secretary-General Amos confirming this.

- The Syrian Coalition further adopted the Communiqué to Eliminate Sexual Violence, in April 2014, which pledges to issue clear orders prohibiting sexual violence, implement specific commitments to ensure timely investigation of alleged abuses and designate a high-level representative to cooperate with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict to ensure the full implementation of the communiqué.

- On 15 May, the Coalition released a statement in response to news of the resignation of Joint Special Representative Brahimi, stating in relevant part: "We appreciate Mr. Brahimi's work to try to bring a political settlement to the conflict in Syria. We share his frustration with the Assad regime for not engaging constructively in the political process. The Syrian Coalition remains committed to a political process. But it is clear that the regime will not desist from its brutal military campaign and engage in a political process until it is compelled to do so. That will require concerted international pressure that has so far been lacking."

- The Coalition established contact with the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat after the resignation of Joint Special Representative Brahimi, in order to set up future meetings and continue the dialogue regarding a political resolution.

- A delegation including the President of the Coalition and the Chief of Staff of the Supreme Military Council of the Free Syrian Army held numerous high-level meetings in Washington, D.C. in May, including meetings with legislative and executive officials (such as United States of America President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry) and leading international NGOs that work in Syria. One of the primary messages of the delegation was to stand firmly for a political solution to the conflict for the long term and, in the immediate term, urge support for Security Council resolution 2139 (2014) and push for full implementation of its humanitarian access provisions.